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Pest faces it. It had a fine façade of fashionable hotels and cafés. Behind these the great city stretched out, first in a dense commercial quarter, then in an endless string of dreary factory suburbs. The whole city, including the satellite towns of 'Greater Pest', had a population of well over a million. It had some fine modern buildings, as well as some very ugly ones, but little that was worth seeing.

THE ALFÖLD. Beyond the outskirts of Pest begins the Alföld—the Great Plain proper of Hungary, an enormous expanse cut in two by the sluggish waters of the Tisza, but possessing few other natural features and, in the main, as flat as Norfolk. It is the home of everything that is commonly regarded as most characteristic and most romantic in Hungarian life. On its empty horizons the Fata Morgana (the Hungarian 'délibab') dances when the sunshine is hot. On such of the empty spaces as have not yet been put under the plough, the old Hungarian life may still be seen. Enormous herds of the ancient Hungarian cattle, which tradition avers the old Magyars to have brought with them from the East—lean, grey beasts, with huge horns and dark, gentle eyes—roam the plains in the charge of wild cowboys (*csikos*) in elaborate sheepskin cloaks. There are plains where the great bustard breeds and marshes haunted by the stork, the crane, the egret and all manner of exotic wild fowl. But in the main, the old life is dying out; where it is still preserved, as on the famous Hortobágy, west of Debreczen, it is chiefly as a museum piece, for the benefit of tourists. Most of the country has been brought under normal cultivation.